Sirhan Witness Admits Borrowing Catchy Phrases From a Book

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LOS ANGELES, March 18—Protesting that he was a dreary writer himself, a defense psychologist today admitted using a book on other criminals to copy catchy phrases for his final report on Sirhan Bishara Sirhan.

The psychologist, Martin M. Schorr of San Diego, sought to defend himself by testifying, in effect, that when you've seen one paranoid, you've seen them all.

He indicated he saw nothing wrong in combing the "Case Book of a Crime Psychiatrist," published last fall, for "exciting language" to spruce up his conclusions about Sirhan.

"I'm not the best writer in the world," Schorr told prosecutor John E. Howard at Sirhan's trial for the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. "If something fits in and says it better, yes, of course I use it."

The basic conclusions about Sirhan, Schorr insisted, were still all his own. He was called the Arab immigrant a dangerous paranoid psychotic with touches of schizophrenia.

Passages Compared

Far more subdued than when he first took the witness stand last week, Schorr acknowledged "borrowing" from two chapters in the book, written by Dr. James A. Brussel, former assistant commissioner of mental hygiene for the State of New York. One chapter was devoted to New York's Mad Bomber, George Metesky; the other, to a so-called "Christmas Eve Killer" who stabbed a Long Island widow to death 12 years ago.

In his chapter on the Mad Bomber, Dr. Brussel wrote at one point: "Ten years later, his delusion had broadened, but not fundamentally changed, to include, apparently, all the people of New York."

Schorr, on Sirhan as a 14-year-old in America: "Then years later, Sirhan's delusional system of persecutory ideas had broadened now, but now basically changed, from that of th efather, the persecutor, to include, apparently, all the Jewish people living in the new state of Israel."

Dr. Brussel: "The paranoiac is the world's champion grudgeholder."

Schorr: "Paranoids are champion grudge-holders."

Howard: "Doctor, by the time you graduated from college, did you know how to use footnotes?"

Schorr: "Yes."

Howard: "But you did not do that?"

Schorr: "No, not in this report."

Not a Paranoid

The psychologist acknowledged writing his final report on Sirhan, dated last Dec. 18, with Dr. Brussel's book by his side, but said he copied or paraphrased from it only that language "that apples to the paranoid mechanism."

Howard pointed out that the Christmas Eve killer was diagnosed as a schizophrenic, not a paranoid.

Schorr said he felt that what he copied from this chapter still applied to Sirhan. Dr. Brussel had written that the Christmas Eve killer, a juvenile, was subconsciously killing his own mother who had failed him.

Schorr said that Sirhan, in assassinating Kennedy, was subconsciously killing his father. The psychologist said Sirhan's mother had been "protecting" him with her love, but then "somewhere along the line, failed him."

The prosecutor pressed Schorr to explain how Mrs. Sirhan had failed. The psychologist said he would put it at the time when Sirhan was watching a television documentary on Sen. Kennedy and flew into a rage at learning that New York Senator had been a longtime supporter of Israel.

"His mother tried to calm him down, but she didn't," Schorr testified. It was at this point, he contended, that Sirhan subconsciously turned his hatred of his father into hatred of Kennedy.